

The Inspire Spotlight

Newsletter of Inspire: A Shalom Afterschool Initiative

JUNE
2019

Inspire READING by the Numbers

4.96

Average grade levels
behind our students
were in reading at the
beginning of the year

95%

Students who
improved their
reading level
throughout the year

9

Reading levels the
student (Shukuru)
who made the most
advances improved
(out of 29 total levels)



INSPIRE
a shalom afterschool initiative



Inspired to be a Leader

By: Divine, 2019 Graduate of Inspire

I was never socially aware of the country that I live in today. I didn't know what was going on nor how to help change it for the better. But Inspire changed all that when it held an election, at the same time as the presidential one between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, to see who would be the Inspire student advisor.

It caught my attention that for the first time in history, a woman was running for president; the same was true at Inspire - one male and one female were running to take the spot. As both elections passed, to no one's surprise, both males were chosen to take the positions. I had a thought in my head: "It's funny how in the history of both the presidential election and the Inspire student advisor, there has never been a female elected. So why don't I run for the position in the next election?"

That year quickly flew by and soon it was a new year and time to pick a new student advisor. I ran for the position because I felt the need to prove a point and because, although the male candidate would have made a good leader, I knew that I would be a *great* leader, and I hate losing. Like any election, we both campaigned and gave our speeches. As we waited for the votes to roll in, I started getting scared that I wouldn't get elected because the male candidate was more popular than me. But I didn't lose hope.

The results came in and my heart started beating so loudly I thought people could hear it. When it was announced that I won, I was so thrilled that in the history of student advisors, I had become **the first female**.



Inspired to be a Leader continued...

When I was elected as the student advisor last year, it pushed me to a point where I wanted to lead everybody to become their best. I wanted to show them that if they put their mind to do something, they can and will achieve it.

I grew a lot as the Inspire student advisor. I learned to always take on things I'd never done before and to not be afraid. I worked to make the changes the students said they wanted, such as field trips and snacks. I had always had anxiety speaking in front of people, but at Inspire when I spoke in front of people I felt comfortable so I knew I could feel comfortable at other places, even presentations at school. Just this year I presented (twice!) in front of an entire church!

At Inspire I thought I would just stay the same and never grow as a person. When I became the student advisor I started to notice myself growing as a person - as a better person for myself and for other people around me. And I started becoming more comfortable because I felt like I had a voice and I could lead people to the right place.

Because of Inspire, young people can become socially aware and feel the need to change and help out their community. At our middle school most students are judged just because they come from a different country or because they don't speak English. But at Inspire, we talk together about the news and what we would change about what happened. These conversations only happen at Inspire - I think that's because most students feel more comfortable, that they can talk about anything and not be judged; they can talk about something and get opinions on it. They all know that they come from different places so they can't judge each other. They can talk freely because they have accents but so does everybody else.

I have grown so much as a leader, but I've also taught others as well. I taught everyone that not only men can take the spot as a leader; women can do it as good as men, or even better! And guess what? A young woman was elected as my successor this year at Inspire. I paved the way!

Divine as a Leader at Inspire

(from top to bottom)

Divine makes friends with everyone at Inspire; Divine tries new (scary!) things like touching an enormous snake at the Atlanta Science Festival; Divine leads her Field Day team to victory – the first time ever that a team of women won!; Divine steps up to serve snack when our snack volunteer was absent.





Spring 2019 in pictures

(clockwise from top left)

We rode MARTA to Piedmont Park and experienced all the [Atlanta Science Festival](#) had to offer; Prince and Alimasi climb their way through the obstacle course our students created for a [Field Day](#) activity; Majaliwa and Nebily play a colorfully fun math game with Ms. Aaliya; our friends from the Paideia Groove Ultimate team were back with us again this spring to teach us the skills of Ultimate and the “spirit of the game”; we enjoyed the great outdoors again this spring and spent lots of time in the woods; Alwia takes Ms. Amy’s temperature as we learned about becoming a nurse (and a plethora of other careers) during [Career Week](#)





2015



2019



2015



2019



Save the Date!

Saturday

October 5, 2019

Join us for our 3rd Annual
Inspire Ultimate Frisbee
Tournament Fundraiser

Python Park - Avondale Estates, GA
Middle school, high school, and adult leagues!

Check our [website](#) later this summer for
details and to register!



A Note from Ms. Natalie

We have HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES y'all!!!!

You may recognize the pictures on the left - they were published in this very newsletter, at the end of the first year of Inspire as we celebrated with our 8th grade graduates. Now, four years later, Ibrahim (above) and Merry (below) are proud, smiling graduates once again – this time of **high school!** Reflecting on his time at Inspire, Ibrahim says “before Inspire I rarely did my homework, but the after school program helped me and made me push myself to work harder....which definitely paid off because I’m a high school graduate now!” It is your support – your financial contributions, your countless hours volunteering – that make Ibrahim’s accomplishments possible. We can’t wait to see what the bright future holds for him and all of our graduates! **Thank you** for your belief in and support of our students as they strive for success in this, their new home.



With gratitude,

Natalie J. Schmucker

Natalie J. Schmucker
Program Coordinator

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